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SIPDIS

COMMERCE FOR SARAH LOPP
STATE FOR MARC HUMPHREY

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATAR'S PLANS TO PURSUE NUCLEAR ENERGY

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- [1](#)B. DOHA 827
- [1](#)C. DOHA 456
- [1](#)D. DOHA 87
- [1](#)E. DOHA 45

KEY POINTS

-- Qatar is considering embarking on a civil nuclear power program, and the Qatar Foundation would soon like to start a nuclear education partnership with Texas A&M University, which already has a branch campus in Doha.

-- U.S. cooperation in this field has thus far been limited because the GOQ has yet to sign an MOU on nuclear cooperation with us.

-- Commercial opportunities for U.S. companies currently include feasibility studies and other contract services. A Qatari decision to embark on a nuclear power program would open up the full range of associated commercial needs to U.S. firms.

-- Qatar has only the beginnings of a regulatory framework for nuclear issues and no indigenous trained workforce in the nuclear field.

-- Several foreign competitors are actively engaging Qatar on commercial nuclear issues, including France, Russia, Belgium, and Canada.

End Key Points.

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Overview of Qatar's Civil Nuclear Power Program
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Note: The paragraphs below correspond to the specific questions contained in reftel.

[1](#)1. The GOQ is currently considering development of a nuclear power generation capacity. Meanwhile, the quasi-governmental Qatar Foundation wants to build on its existing partnership with Texas A&M University to create an educational base for training Qataris in nuclear fields. Qatar signaled its interest in this sector by hosting a Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Nuclear Energy Forum from November 10-11, 2008 which brought together regional governments, multilateral organizations, and the nuclear industry. The event was sponsored by Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa), Qatar Petroleum (QP), Thorium Power, Electricite de France (EDF), and ACWA International, with additional support from the Qatar Science and Technology Park. There is

reportedly a recommendation pending before the GOQ for a detailed study of the prospects of a national nuclear power program.

-- Unlike other Gulf states, the U.S. does not yet have a nuclear MOU with Qatar. The Secretary's Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation, Ambassador Jackie Wolcott, and accompanying teams visited Qatar in both June and November 2008 and held discussions with GOQ officials on the MOU and a way forward on nuclear cooperation. However, a final decision on the MOU remains pending with the GOQ. A U.S.-Qatar MOU would first require Qatari ratification of a safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

¶2. Qatar has several motivations for pursuing nuclear power. Though Qatar has the third-largest gas reserves in the world and well-developed energy infrastructure, it nonetheless sees value in energy diversification, particularly as its power demands have been growing by over 10 percent each year. The Energy Minister stated at the MENA forum that Qatar was "reassessing the role that nuclear energy might play in (its) domestic energy mix." Other officials have stated that Qatar's growing power needs and the moratorium on new gas projects has prompted the Ministry of Energy and Industry to examine nuclear power from a business potential. However, the Ministry is still in the preliminary stages of creating a business model for how nuclear power might be harnessed in Qatar. Qatar also sees other GCC countries, particularly the UAE, moving forward on nuclear plans and does not want to be left behind. And beyond nuclear energy, some elements in the GOQ would like to see local development of a nuclear medicine program.

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¶3. It is not clear how the government will finance or promote a civilian nuclear sector, but nuclear activities will likely be conducted via government-controlled entities, such as the public utilities. As part of its vision of subsidizing and elevating Qatar's educational system, the Qatar Foundation hopes to bolster nuclear engineering programs to begin educating and training a generation of Qataris with sufficient skills and background in the field.

¶4. Key nuclear decision-making bodies and officials include:

-- Ministry of Energy and Industry. Minister Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah is the primary decision-maker for all aspects of Qatar's energy industry. Manager of Corporate Planning Issa al-Ghanim is also closely involved in the Ministry's examination of nuclear power. Al-Ghanim is also Vice Chairman of both Kahramaa and the separate Qatar Electricity and Water Company.

-- Kahramaa (Qatar's main power and water utility). Manager Yousuf Janahi has publicly represented the utility on this issue.

-- The Ministry of Environment (formerly the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves) will, according to its officials, have primary regulatory responsibility for nuclear matters. Dr. Rashid Al-Kuwari is the Director of the Radiological Protection and Nuclear Energy Department.

-- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be involved in legal matters related to Qatar's nuclear program. The primary interlocutor for post so far has been MFA Director for Legal Affairs Ahmed Hassan Al-Hammadi. Ultimately, the Amir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad Bin Jassim Al Thani will be the key decision-makers on approving any international agreements or conventions.

-- Shaykha Mozah, the Amir's consort and Chair of Qatar Foundation, is the driving force behind QF's push to play the leading role in developing an indigenous human resources capability for nuclear energy. Her Science and Technology

Adviser, Dr. Tidu Maini, and the Science and Technology Park Managing Director, Dr. Eulian Roberts, are also key interlocutors.

-- Qatar University Professor Ilham Al-Qaradawi has played a key liaison role with Texas A&M and advises the government on nuclear matters. She is also a nuclear medicine technology consultant for hospitals on radioisotopes that would require production in Qatar.

¶5. Qatar has an embryonic nuclear regulatory authority housed in the Ministry of Environment. According to the Ministry, its authorities will include the conclusion of technical cooperation agreements, adoption of international conventions, and development of a strategic plan. This primacy may not be recognized yet by other Qatari actors; in June 2008, QF representatives asked a USG inter-agency team if the U.S. could help Qatar establish a national regulatory authority.

¶6. Qatar does not/not have a domestic nuclear liability law.

¶7. Qatar does not/not have a manufacturing sector involved in nuclear-related products or services.

¶8. Qatar has virtually no nuclear-trained indigenous workforce. The development of civil nuclear power would require a significant foreign workforce, a key point recognized by the government. The Ministry of Energy and Industry estimates that a single nuclear plant would require 1000 associated personnel (600 operators and 400 regulators), a number that is unworkable under a Qatari-intensive workforce model. The Qatar Foundation under Shaykha Mozah envisions its goal as building an indigenous Qatari human resources capacity in this area which would help fill this gap over the next two decades. QF and the Ministry of Environment are beginning to look at programs for training domestic personnel. Most notably, QF would like to enter into an educational partnership with Texas A&M University, but the university is waiting until the GOQ and USG sign a formal MOU on cooperation.

Opportunities for U.S. Industry

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¶9. Qatar currently has no known nuclear-related tenders, though this could change in the near future as the GOQ looks to undertake feasibility studies or other contract services. The tender/selection process would depend on the Qatari entity taking action, and could come from one or more of the Ministry of Energy and Industry, the Ministry of Environment, or the Qatar Foundation.

¶10. At this stage, nuclear sector opportunities for U.S. businesses probably include feasibility studies and other contract services. At the November nuclear energy forum, one Qatari official noted the GOQ would be engaging an outside consultant to study several preliminary questions for a nuclear power industry, including the ability of Qatar's grid to support a 1,000 MW nuclear power plant and finding a suitable site for it. Over time, if Qatar decides to invest in a domestic industry, the opportunities would include the full spectrum of plant construction, management, logistics, operations, etc. Any nuclear plants would likely be built using the same joint venture model Qatar uses for its major liquefied natural gas projects.

¶11. The primary companies involved in Qatar's civil nuclear sector would be Qatar Petroleum, (the state-owned energy company), and Kahramaa (the power and water utility).

Foreign Competitors

¶12. Several other nuclear supplier countries are engaging Qatar; those known to the Embassy include France, Belgium, Canada, and Russia. Political considerations would likely be a factor in Qatar's decision about which countries to cooperate with on nuclear supply.

-- A Qatari delegation led by the Ministry of Energy and Industry Planning Director Issa al-Ghanim visited Russia and ROSATOM in October.

-- France is interested in helping Qatar build and operate nuclear plants. The French oil company Total and Electricite de France (EDF) reportedly held discussions with Qatar, and during President Sarkozy's January 2008 trip to Doha, the GOQ signed an MOU with EDF which includes nuclear cooperation as one aspect of their joint work.

-- Qatar held technical discussions with a Belgian team in January 2008 and a team from the Ministry of Environment visited Belgium in June 2008.

-- At the November nuclear energy forum, nuclear suppliers making presentations included Areva, EDF, Total, Suez-Tractebel, and Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL).

LeBaron